Unit 14: Luxury Hospitality

Delivery guidance

In this unit your learners will develop knowledge and understanding of the luxury hospitality industry. They will gain insight into how important customer needs and wants are in luxury hospitality and the methods used to improve customer service, including problem solving. This unit is designed to cover a broad spectrum of luxury hospitality ranging from accommodation services to membership clubs. Learners will gain an insight into the processes involved in raising the standards of customer service to suit luxury hospitality. Learners will need to be able to appreciate the actions taken by different organisations in order to stand out for first time and returning guests.

Learners will develop skills that luxury hospitality employers are looking for, such as problem solving, communication and planning. The main focus is on soft skills and excellent customer service. You are likely to use a broad range of different teaching, learning and delivery methods in this unit, such as the following:

- trips and visits – where possible, one of the most effective ways of developing learners' knowledge and understanding of the industry is to visit different types of luxury hospitality businesses
- case studies, to illustrate the impacts – both positive and negative – of different standards of service in luxury hospitality
- individual or group presentations, to explore a range of different luxury hospitality businesses and the planning required to make them a success
- employer involvement – industry experts such as managers or supervisors from luxury hospitality businesses can share their approach to luxury hospitality, and especially customer service. They could give examples of planning materials, promotional literature and customer service guidelines. Experts could also act as 'clients' for learners to develop their customer service skills
- work experience – learners could undertake work placements at luxury hospitality venues in any of the customer-facing departments and share their experiences with others
- discussions – class and small group discussions on, for example, different customer service scenarios in luxury hospitality, and emerging trends for different customer types.

Remember that group work is a useful and acceptable form of delivery and formative assessment, but you must ensure that each learner independently produces their own evidence containing enough depth and detail for summative assessment.

Approaching the unit

Learning aim A explores the luxury hospitality industry, first in terms of the different types of business which are included in luxury hospitality. Once learners have a firm understanding of the different types, they need to understand the scope and scale, and compare this to the hospitality industry as a whole. The focus through this aim is what makes a hospitality business 'luxury'. Research activities across all types of luxury hospitality will help to reinforce their understanding and help them to evaluate it in the context of different real-life situations. A sensible way to deliver this is to use a wide range of examples of luxury hospitality (selecting local examples might make it easier for research). There are lots of similarities between luxury hospitality businesses but identifying the key differences and unique features of particular businesses is a useful approach. Learners could find luxury hospitality job vacancies, including supervisory roles for each type of provider, so that they begin to understand the purpose of luxury hospitality. This will help them develop a keen understanding of a supervisor's role and responsibilities.

An essential part of this learning aim is that learners develop their ability to conduct their own research, as this will be a vital part of the assignment. Allowing learners to conduct online research using search engines might take longer initially but is vital in ensuring they are capable of finding correct, reliable information for themselves.

Learning aim B should develop learners' understanding of the importance of customer service in luxury hospitality, and the customer experience map. Learners will need opportunities to investigate the needs and expectations of customers and target markets in various luxury hospitality businesses, using the internet or industry visits. Learners should look at how these affect the overall customer service experience planning; this could be applied to a case study or a customer experience map.

The customer service experience will introduce the main stages of guest contact with luxury hospitality departments as this enables learners to understand the full range of responsibilities of staff, as well as the systems and procedures that need to be in place to enable them to meet these responsibilities. Get your learners to see the challenges that staff face when multitasking and providing excellent customer service with professionalism. It is also recommended that the learners identify critical touch points in a variety of luxury hospitality businesses to see the similarities and differences. This could be achieved through work experience or role-playing activities.

Learning aim C should develop learners' understanding of the importance and workings of customer service in luxury hospitality. It introduces the main techniques and procedures used in dealing with a wide range of customers. Learners will need to understand the importance of standards and the procedures followed to ensure these are maintained. They will need to develop the skills to audit these standards in all areas of luxury hospitality operations. Give your learners the opportunity to audit and review standards for themselves, as this will help develop their knowledge in this area. Skills can be assessed through role-play or in a real working environment, but learners should learn more than the processes and procedures involved in customer service. Focus on how they communicate with guests, their body language, listening skills and the ability to ask the right questions and say the right things. Practice will obviously develop these skills, as will the opportunity to observe.

It is not necessary to teach the learning outcomes in order, as allowing learners to practise their skills from the outset will support their development and understanding of the skills required.

Assessment model

Learning aim	Key content areas	Recommended assessment approach
A Explore the current structure, characteristics and supervision of luxury hospitality	**A1** Luxury hospitality structure and characteristics **A2** Job roles and supervisory skills	A portfolio comprising research that collectively supports an evaluation of the current luxury hospitality sector including its structure, required supervisory skills and job roles. An investigation into customer needs and wants in luxury hospitality creating a customer experience map for a specified department.
B Explore the customer service experience, needs and expectations in luxury hospitality	**B1** Customer service experience **B2** Customer experience map to create business opportunities and optimise customer touch points	
C Demonstrate customer service and problem solving in different luxury hospitality situations	**C1** Communication and interpersonal skills **C2** Dealing effectively with customer service requests, complaints and finding solutions	A practical observation of customer service and problem solving developed from the research to create a customer experience map.

Assessment guidance

This unit is internally assessed through assignments and observations. All learners must independently generate evidence that can be authenticated. The recommended assessment for this unit is through internally assessed assignments.

One of the recommended assignments for learning aims A and B is a portfolio reflecting research into luxury hospitality, a supervisor's role and the customer service experience. In order to pass this assessment, learners will need to select and research at least two luxury hospitality businesses by looking at their products, services and structure. They should investigate staffing structure and focus in particular on the supervisory role and responsibilities. You should ensure that the examples selected give enough scope to enable them to fully the complete the assessment. Learners will then continue the investigation, adding to the portfolio, but the focus is on customer service in luxury hospitality. They should explain the importance, needs, wants and preferences of luxury hospitality guests. The final part of the portfolio is a customer experience map for one selected department in luxury hospitality; again, it is recommended that the example used for the map comes from the original two luxury hospitality businesses used previously.

It is essential that you allow learners to individually select their own examples of businesses to investigate, and research evidence to include in their work, if they are to show the individual creativity required to achieve the universal distinction criterion.

For learning aim C, the assessment could take the form of two role-play situations, or it could be assessed in a real working environment, such as a work experience placement. The assessment should consist of two customer service scenarios in luxury hospitality, focused on problem solving and finding solutions to customers' wishes. These will require a response and the completion of documentation to a professional standard. Video record this

assessment where possible and complete a record of activity (either yourself or ask the professional witnessing the situation, if in a workplace). This should be done for each individual learner. Assessors should complete observation records, while people such as work colleagues can complete witness statements. Observation records alone are not sufficient sources of learner evidence; the original learner-generated evidence must support them.

You will need to factor in time to assess within the GLH. It is essential that you allow learners to individually select their own examples of businesses and communications to investigate, and the research evidence to include in their work, if they are to show the individual creativity required to achieve the universal distinction criterion.

Getting started

This gives you a starting place for one way of delivering the unit, based on the recommended assessment approach in the specification.

Unit 14: Luxury Hospitality

Introduction

Having looked at the hospitality industry in its entirety, this unit is about luxury hospitality. Do your learners have any experience of, or are some employed in, the luxury hospitality industry? If so, where do they work and in what roles? Explore and compare your learners' previous experience or research into luxury hospitality and share your own experiences. Use videos of luxury hospitality organisations to show what is meant by 'luxury'. This can be a good icebreaker with learners, giving you a useful starting point for unit delivery.

Learning aim A: Explore the current structure, characteristics and supervision of luxury hospitality

- Hold a class discussion continuing from the introduction and exploring the question 'What is luxury hospitality and what does it mean?'. Ask learners to write down lists of tangibles and intangibles. Explore the difference in opinions to come to a working definition of 'luxury hospitality'.
- Use a presentation to introduce your learners to a profile of the luxury hospitality industry, including statistics, size, scope, number and types of employees, and economic value to the local and national economy. Give your students a wide range of examples of luxury hospitality, e.g. super yachts and resorts. Discuss the focus on the relationship between high quality of product and services and luxury hospitality.
- Run an idea creation exercise to generate examples of luxury hospitality business types. Follow this with a teacher-led overview of the types of luxury hospitality. Learners could then organise their generated examples into various classifications, e.g. accommodation, food and drink. Offer up some unusual examples, e.g. luxury safaris or glamping, for the group to categorise. Link any brand names arising with the appropriate business areas.
- Using the exercise above, discuss how the types differentiate in terms of the personalisation services they offer and design of guest areas.
- Ask learners to work in small groups to research and gather information on the structure and organisation of different luxury hospitality businesses. This should include the functional/operational areas; for example, human resources, research and development, sales, marketing, purchasing, production and quality, finance, customer service, IT, administration. Learners could research this online or they could visit luxury hospitality businesses with a view to gathering information on a variety of businesses.
- Ask learners to prepare and deliver a professional presentation, using slides and speaker notes, to share their findings with the class.
- Draw an organisational chart for luxury hospitality businesses with your learners. Show them at least two contrasting businesses and ask them to identify how the businesses may differ and why.
- Lead a discussion on the suitability of different types of structure and organisation for the efficient running of different businesses and delivery of tailored customer service in luxury hospitality.

- Give your learners a series of job descriptions at all levels for different luxury hospitality businesses. (These do not have to be formal – just an overview of the duties of various job roles.) Ask your learners to come up with their own explanation of what it means to work in luxury hospitality and pick out from the job description the various duties that contribute to this.
- A guest speaker (supervisor or manager in luxury hospitality) could give a talk on a supervisor's role, responsibilities and skills. Prepare the learners before the session to write some questions that they would like to ask but also emphasise questions/content on role, responsibility and skills, as well as quality control issues.
- Lead a whole class discussion reviewing the information gathered from the talk; research what roles and responsibilities there are and how these are different between businesses. Move the discussion on to the skills needed to match these roles and responsibilities.
- Review the supervisory job roles in luxury hospitality. Give your learners a list of job titles, each with a short description of the role and a set of cards with skills and responsibilities printed on them. Ask your learners to match the skills and responsibilities to the job roles. As an extension, they could write up an explanation of why the skills are needed for the role.
- Learners complete an activity involving organisational and management skills, such as creating a staff rota for luxury hospitality. For the learners that have completed this, ask them to write up their reasoning behind the way they have completed the rota.
- Learners could research how luxury hospitality businesses use technology and digital media to enhance customer loyalty in luxury hospitality, as well as new trends and how these could help businesses.
- Give your learners a series of supervisory scenarios, e.g. a team briefing, an induction or a training session for new team members. Ask them to identify what communication skills the supervisor will need to have with their team members and different departments to ensure the needs of the guests are met. Ask your learners how supervisors might communicate this information.
- Lead a research activity to highlight luxury hospitality moving away from physical facilities and forming around customer experiences and personalisation.
- Ensure learners are prepared for assessment before giving them the assignment brief.

Learning aim B: Explore the customer service experience, needs and expectations in luxury hospitality

- You should aim to establish the learners' experience and knowledge of customer service. This could be their experience as a customer and/or in a part-time job.
- Ask learners to define what customer 'needs, wants and expectations' are and why organisations need to meet and exceed them. Learners could then describe what needs, wants and expectations might look like in relation to different luxury hospitality businesses. They can discuss or research the similarities but also the differences between different businesses in luxury hospitality. Ask learners to review the relationship between understanding customer behaviour and attitudes of the luxury hospitality market segment, and how this helps to build brand loyalty and trust.
- Ask learners why customer needs may vary and review the possible needs of different customers, especially in luxury hospitality.
- Ask learners to produce posters on the importance of first impressions in different customer service situations, relating this to a luxury hospitality business. This could be extended to include

research such as seeing how many people are posting on different sites about the luxury hospitality businesses and the effect this has on those businesses (for example, if a bad review goes viral). This could also include famous travel bloggers or writers (even influencers) and the influence they can have on the business.

- Ask learners to consider how different factors influence customer decisions about whether to make a purchase or use a service or provider.
- Use research of customer service in luxury hospitality businesses to introduce the key principles of customer service within luxury hospitality organisations, and the goals of customer-focused organisations. As an extension, you could ask them to compare and contrast two organisations' customer service and write up their opinions with evidence.
- Students think about the concepts of market segmentation and customer profiling to determine a luxury hospitality organisation's 'target market'.
- In pairs, students identify different market segments and feed back to the group.
- As a group, expand on the notion of market segmentation and why certain groups are targeted by luxury hospitality organisations.
- Hold a research activity into different luxury hospitality businesses to identify different market profiles and characteristics.
- Give learners hypothetical scenarios to illustrate different factors that drive and influence customer engagement, e.g. compelling offers, exclusivity, experiences.
- In small groups, ask your learners to write some advertising content to appeal to customers from one particular market segment or for a particular type of organisation.
- Develop ideas for brand loyalty and improvements to the customer experience.
- Establish what is meant by 'the customer journey'. Learners could use mind mapping to draw out their own interpretation of the customer journey. Ask them to look at engagement factors: different opportunities for customer engagement, onboarding and post-boarding strategies for customer engagement. You could use a case study to identify how successful luxury hospitality organisations create a customer-focused brand that implements high standards of service, and achieve their organisational objectives.
- Hold a workshop activity where learners map a complete journey through a luxury hospitality organisation, from initial awareness of a business to exit. Give one-to-one and group support for the process.
- Introduce the concept of customer touch points. Learners may already be aware of the concept of touch points from their research, visit and mapping of their experience.
- Individually or in groups, using their maps, learners identify potential touch points and feed back their findings.
- Use the touch point mapping results to discuss possible impacts of succeeding at each touch point.
- As a group, discuss how the organisation can optimise each of the customer touch points to influence the behaviour, responses and actions of its customers.
- Ensure learners are prepared for assessment before giving them the assignment brief.

Learning aim C: Demonstrate customer service and problem solving in different luxury hospitality situations

- Your input and the activities you ask learners to undertake are key to a successful assessment. Listening and questioning are skills that can be developed through work experience or role-plays. You could use email and letter writing activities based on case studies to develop non-verbal skills.
- Discuss as a class verbal and non-verbal communication, and appropriate situations in which to use them. Use scenarios or case studies to illustrate the points.
- Facilitate a number of question and answer or mind map sessions to check learners' knowledge regarding recognising and overcoming barriers to communication, using questioning and appropriate behaviour to deal with situations.
- Complete a role-play activity where different forms of body language and behaviour are demonstrated – both positive and negative.
- You could then deliver a series of sessions focusing on presentations to cover dealing with customer service requests and complaints effectively. Pay particular attention to problem solving and solution finding, as these are key to customer satisfaction. Tailor the activities to your students, using a range of basic and complex problem solving.
- Review organisational policies for dealing with customers – how do these differ?
- Offer activities that focus on each of the key elements in the specification and that give learners the opportunity to listen, question and adopt the appropriate body language. This will include a wide range of customer service situations highlighting the importance of giving correct information on products and services, understanding limitations, dealing with problems and looking for solutions.
- Practise role-plays in small groups; this is essential so that learners develop confidence and skills in preparation for assessment. You could give learners a scenario to role-play and allocate one person as an observer to take notes and feedback. Give them a basic 'marking' form to fill in so they can see the type of criteria they need to fulfil in order to successfully complete the assessment. (They should be made aware that this is not the actual form the assessor will use.)
- It is important to allow time for learners to reflect on their role-play scenarios, so ensure there are activities where learners can write up short paragraphs outlining what they did and what they would do differently, explaining why.
- Ensure learners are prepared for assessment before giving them the assignment brief.

Details of links to other BTEC units and qualifications, and to other relevant units/qualifications

This unit links to:

- Unit 1: The Hospitality Industry
- Unit 5: Cost Control for Hospitality Supervisors
- Unit 15: Front Office Operations
- Unit 16: Accommodation Operations
- Unit 21: Technology and Digital Media in Hospitality

Resources

In addition to the resources listed below, publishers are likely to produce Pearson-endorsed textbooks that support this unit of the BTEC International in Hospitality. Check the Pearson website (http://qualifications.pearson.com/endorsed-resources) for more information as titles achieve endorsement.

Textbooks

Swarbrooke, J – *The Meaning of Luxury in Tourism, Hospitality and Events* (Goodfellow Publishers Limited, 2018) ISBN: 9781911396079

Kanani, RB – *A Wealth of Insight: The World's Best Luxury Hoteliers on Leadership, Management, and the Future of 5-Star Hospitality* (Black Truffle Press, 2017) ISBN 9781633936201

Websites

Visit the International Luxury Hotel Association website for a good overview of the luxury hospitality industry.

Search for 'Luxury Hospitality Magazine' online. This is a good introductory resource.

Pearson is not responsible for the content of any external internet sites. It is essential for tutors to preview each website before using it in class so as to ensure that the URL is still accurate, relevant and appropriate. We suggest that tutors bookmark useful websites and consider enabling students to access them through the school/college intranet.